



*Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515*

*Anna G. Eskoo  
Fourteenth District  
California*

May 25, 2006

The Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Nicholson,

I'm writing to express my deep concern about the Department of Veterans Affairs loss of personal data on more than 26 million veterans, as well as my outrage about your Department's failure to disclose the breach of security for 19 days. For the veterans of my Congressional District, as well as veterans across the country, this represents a serious emergency.

California's 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is home to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, a major national facility that provides care for over 350,000 veterans in the Bay Area and western United States. As their Representative in Congress it's incumbent upon me to ensure that the federal government is a worthy steward in providing the services they've earned, while simultaneously providing the utmost care to protect their invaluable personal information from theft, loss or abuse. To learn that your Department waited a full 19 days before informing 27 million Americans that the security of their personal privacy has been compromised adds insult to injury.

I urge you in the strongest terms to spare no effort in recovering this data and punishing those responsible. It's also essential that the VA immediately establish processes and procedures that will ensure that this security failure does not occur again.

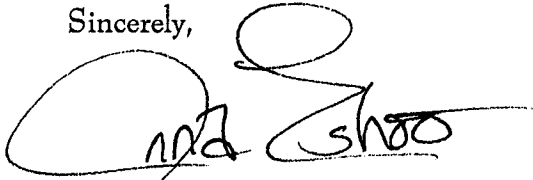
I've cosponsored H.R. 5455, the *Veterans Identity Protection Act of 2006*, legislation which will provide credit monitoring free of charge to individuals affected by this breach. I urge you to express your full support for this measure to provide our nation's veterans with an immediate assurance that their government is acting quickly to address the issue and protect them from criminal activity.

As a personal victim of identity theft, I have a firsthand understanding of the gravity of the problem and the damaging effects it can have on people's lives. For millions of veterans living on fixed incomes this incident represents nothing less than a national emergency. The VA should immediately develop a plan to both notify those affected, and if necessary, provide compensation for victims of fraud. Furthermore, the VA should devote its fullest resources to assist the FBI

and other federal and local investigators to resolve the issue, and provide our nation's veterans with the security and care they deserve.

I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Eshoo", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress